



TWENTY-SECOND JUDICIAL CIRCUIT OF MISSOURI  
CIVIL COURTS BUILDING  
10 NORTH TUCKER BLVD.  
ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI 63101

REX M. BURLISON  
PRESIDING JUDGE

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July 10, 2019

Honorable Dan Aaron Polster  
Carl B. Stokes United States Courthouse  
801 Superior Ave.  
Courtroom 18B  
Cleveland, OH 44113-1837

RE: National Prescription Opiate Litigation 1:17-MD-2804

Dear Judge Polster:

As we previously discussed, I am the Presiding Judge for the 22<sup>nd</sup> Judicial Circuit of Missouri, located in the City of St. Louis. In my prior correspondence, under date of June 25, 2019, I referenced the case of *Jefferson County et al., v. Williams et al.*, (#1922-CC00203). That case involves 21 Missouri counties and cities, as Plaintiffs, filing jointly against opioid manufacturers, distributors, pharmacies and prescription benefit managers. The case was removed and now is within your inventory of cases in the National Prescription Opiate Litigation.

Currently I preside over *State of Missouri v. Purdue Pharma, L.P., et al.*, (#1722-CC10626), filed by the Attorney General of the state of Missouri, against manufacturers of opioids. Obviously, the opioid problem is a concern across Missouri and the United States. The criminal case load in the city of St. Louis is heavy with defendants addicted to opioids, heroin and fentanyl, straining budgets and resources.

I would appreciate if you would consider severing and remanding your Jefferson and Franklin county cases to the 22<sup>nd</sup> Judicial Circuit of Missouri. The counties of Jefferson and Franklin, if remanded, would allow a regional approach to litigate the interest of the metropolitan St. Louis area. These counties lie to the south and west of St. Louis and represent a cross section of the interests of this area of Missouri. While the city of St. Louis is an urban area, Jefferson county is primarily suburban with some rural and Franklin county is mostly rural. The concentration of these cases in this circuit would provide timely management, coordination and adjudication of these claims and defenses. For these reasons, I request that you sever and remand these two cases to the 22<sup>nd</sup> Judicial Circuit of Missouri where they can be consolidated with my State case and tried together.

The 22<sup>nd</sup> Judicial Circuit of Missouri is capable of handling this complex litigation. Judges assigned to this circuit's mass tort docket have for years presided over complex cases, from filing to verdict. If these two Plaintiffs are severed and remanded, I would anticipate the entry of case management orders, setting out discovery deadlines and a prompt trial dates.

Thank you for your continued considerations.

Sincerely,



Rex Burlison  
Presiding Judge  
22<sup>nd</sup> Judicial Circuit  
State of Missouri